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INFO SOUTHERN AF DEVELOPMENT COMMUNITY COLLECTIVE

RUCNDT/USMISSION USUN NEW YORK 0001

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 04 WINDHOEK 000007

SIPDIS

ISN FOR RMONGIELLO

AF/S FOR PGWYN

E.O. 12958: DECL: 2020/01/25

TAGS: [EMIN](#) [KNNP](#) [MNUC](#) [PARM](#) [TRGY](#) [ETTC](#) [IR](#) [WA](#)

SUBJECT: Namibia's Rossing Uranium -- A USG Evaluation

REF: 09 WINDHOEK 348; 09 WINDHOEK 159 CLASSIFIED BY: Dennise Mathieu, Ambassador; REASON: 1.4(B), (E), (G)

----- Summary -----

¶1. (SBU) A combined National Nuclear Security Administration (NNSA) and State Department team visited Rio Tinto's Rossing Uranium Mine and rec

----- Visit Background -----

¶2. (SBU) Following the theft from Rossing Uranium of 170 kgs of U308 in September 2009, Rossing's Managing Director (MD) Mike Leech approached

----- The September 2009 Theft -----

3.(C) xxxxxxxxxxxx provided a detailed account of the September 2009 theft. Rossing employee xxxxxxxxxxxx and Rossing contractor xxxxxxxxxxxx w

4.(C) The two employees exploited their knowledge of the various vulnerabilities within the FPR and elsewhere at the mine to perpetrate the the

5.(C) Thereafter, xxxxxxxxxxxx circumvented a number of controls on waste removal from the FPR. xxxxxxxxxxxx used a hauling truck to take the c

6.(C) Rossing's finished uranium oxide (U3O8) is packaged in steel drums which can hold a maximum of 485 kgs (gross weight including the drum).

7.(C) Five other employees worked on the same FPR shift as xxxxxxxxxxxx and xxxxxxxxxxxx . The five have not been directly implicated and to da

----- The Security Evaluation -----

¶8. (SBU) The combined USG team reviewed the security surrounding the entire lifecycle of Rossing's uranium business - from excavation of the c

¶9.(SBU) Rossing management provided a full rundown of the actions the company has taken to prevent future U308 thefts. Rossing has conducted a

- Tightened access controls on the entire site and specifically the FPR

- Improved/increased use of biometrics (retinal scanners)

- Additional closed circuit TVs and CCTV storage media

- Physical segregation of drums (empty, filled, and damaged drums).

- Improved drum identification systems (bar codes, labels)

- Tamper-proof seals on finished drums

- Improved fencing and gates/access points

- New procedures for waste product removal

- Increased security training

- Intrusion detection system on perimeter fencing and at critical locations

¶10.(SBU) The DOE NNSA team provided Rossing a series of suggestions, many of which are captured within the Rossings security improvement plan.

----- The Iranian Catch 22 -----

¶11.(SBU) State (ISN) inquired about Rossing's awareness of the UNSCRs on Iran and about the government of Iran's 15 percent stake in Rossing th

¶12.(SBU) Rossing expressed an interest in buying Iran's share in the company, but they are unable to do so because they are prohibited from tra

¶13.(SBU) Action Request: Rossing would be happy to rid itself of its Iranian stakeholder, as the IFIC stake always causes company difficulty wh

¶14.(SBU) Comment: Rossing's Senior Management was extremely open with the USG team about the September 2009 incident, and the lapses in its sec